

City of Excelsior
Hennepin County, Minnesota

MINUTES
EXCELSIOR WORK SESSION MINUTES

July 18, 2016

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Gaylord called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Present: Councilmembers Caron, Carlson, Beattie, Miller (arrived at 6:12 p.m.) and Mayor Gaylord

Absent: None

Also Present: City Manager Luger, City Attorney Staunton, City Planner Smith, and City Clerk Orlofsky

2. AGENDA APPROVAL

Beattie moved, Caron seconded, to approve the agenda. Motion carried 4/0.

3. SINGLE FAMILY SCALE STANDARD

City Planner Smith explained that Mayor Gaylord, Councilmember Caron and staff have been meeting over the past few months to go over the proposed Single Family Development Standards that were recommended by the Planning Commission.

Smith provided an update on the standards.

Construction Management

Smith explained that currently developers notify residents within 200 feet of a new house. Some residents believe the building plans that the developer provides have already been approved by the City.

Staff would recommend that the City mails property owners the proposed plans with a letter stating the plans have not been approved and comments are encouraged.

Jon Monson, 202 Water Street, asked the Council what the purpose of the notification was for. He explained that as a developer he normally notifies the neighbors to apologize for the inconvenience. Monson felt that this notice seemed a little cumbersome.

The Council agreed that they would still continue and move forward with staff sending the notification.

Old House Renovation

Caron explained that they wanted to offer an incentive to add onto a house instead of razing a house, so they suggested that they provide a 30% building permit credit toward additions.

The Council agreed that this was a good solution.

Variance for Preserving Historic Homes

Smith explained that older homes may not be designed for modern expectations (large kitchens, mudrooms, etc.) The City would prefer to adapt an older home even if a variance is required, than raze the home and construct a new one.

Staff offered a solution to adopt variance policies similar to Minnetonka, but add the "preservation of a home over 50 years old" as a consideration for a variance. This would give the Planning Commission and City Council the discretion of deciding if a variance is needed for the preservation of an older home.

Front and Rear Setbacks

Smith explained that Excelsior has a 25-foot front yard setback and a 20-foot rear yard setback for homes. Historically, homes were constructed closer to the street as front yards with larger rear yards. Since front yards are more public and rear yards are more private.

Smith provided the Council with some examples of different cities that are historic in nature for comparison purposes.

Staff's solution is to change the front yard setback to 20' and the rear yard setback to 25' and the proposed principal structure (or addition thereto) shall be no closer to the street than the closest principal structure on either adjacent lot on the same block and same side of the street, but the proposed principal structure (or addition thereto) need not be farther than 50' from the front lot line.

Monson asked if the porch exception would still apply. Council replied that it would still apply.

Council agreed that changing the front yard setback to 20' and the rear yard setbacks to 25' was a reasonable request.

Tree Preservation

Smith explained that Excelsior currently allows the removal of one significant tree without a permit. More than one significant tree requires a tree preservation plan and replacement of 3" of tree height for each 8"

Tree Preservation – Continued

of height for significant trees that are coniferous. Trees being installed for replacement are small.

Staff suggested that the City increase the size of significant tree from 6" to 10".

Beattie asked if a tree was diseased would they be able to remove it.

Smith explained there are seven conditions that would allow a property owner to remove a tree with the approval of the City Arborist and a diseased tree is one of those conditions.

Carlson asked if the City has landmark trees designated in the City. Smith answered that he believed the City did have some boulevard trees designated and marked.

Beattie asked if we could broaden the definition of the ordinance.

Carlson suggested that the Council strike condition (7) from the list of conditions. Condition (7) states that if the tree unreasonably burdens development that it may be removed.

The City Council agreed to direct the Planning Commission to work through this standard.

Garages

Smith explained that detached garages and sheds have a two-foot side yard setback and three-foot rear yard setback, but the height of detached garages can be up to 20 feet and overwhelm neighboring backyards. Sheds may also be up to 20 feet in height.

Part of staff's solution is to recommend limiting the size of a detached garage to 576 sf (24'x24') for lots less than 12,000 sf and 768 sf (24'x 32') for lots greater than 12,000 sf.

Miller is supportive of a change but he would like to see the Planning Commission review it and give Council the feedback.

Gaylord added that he would like to reduce the congestion and the rear yard setback.

Caron added that she has heard residents voice concern from both sides of this issue. Caron suggested that the Council direct this standard to the Planning Commission for further discussion and the Council agreed.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Beattie moved, Carlson seconded, to adjourn at 6:58 p.m. Motion carried 5/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Orlofsky
City Clerk